

Special Audience, Special Concerns: Children and the Media

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American children live media saturated lives

- According to a March 2005 Kaiser Family Foundation Study the typical 8-18 year old lives in a home with:
- 3.5 TVs
- 3.3 radios
- 2.9 VCRs/DVDs
- 2.1 Videogame Players
- 1.5 Computers
- 68% have TVs & 49% have videogame players in their bedroom
- 31% have computer and 20% have Internet access in their bedrooms

Screen Media Dominate Media Use

- 8-18 year olds spend an average of nearly 6 1/2 hours a day with media
- 8-18 year olds spend 4 hours a day with TV, videos, DVDs and prerecorded shows
- 0-6 year olds spend an average of 2 hours a day with screen media

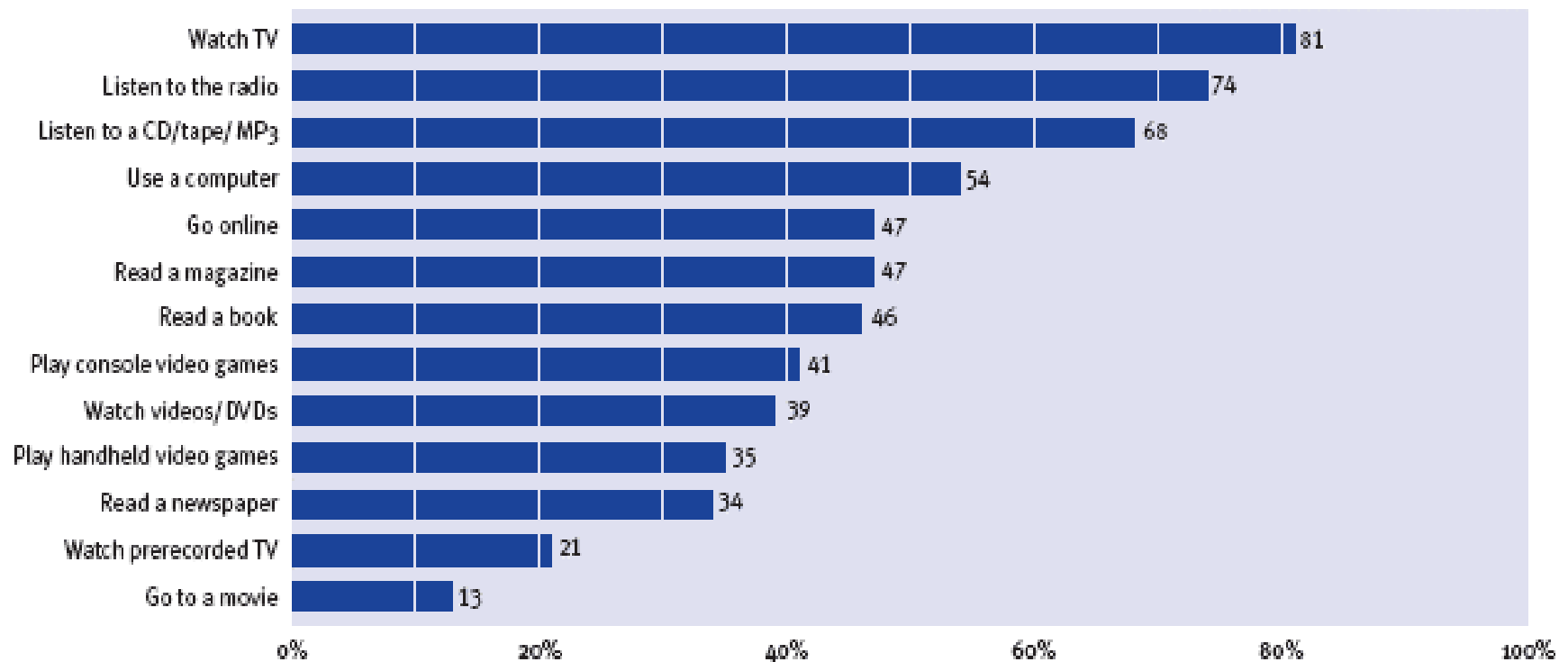
Young Children's Use of Media

Zero to Six year old's time spent on average day:

Watching TV	65 minutes
Watching video	38 minutes
Listening to music	59 minutes
Reading/being read to	39 minutes
Playing videogames	5 minutes
Using computer	10 minutes
 Total Screen use	 1 hour 58 minutes

Which Media Young People Use

In a typical day, percentage of 8- to 18-year-olds who...



- Children and Youth have access to media in their bedrooms and through portable devices
- Children and Youth are multi-taskers and there is some evidence that how they watch tv may be changing

Age, Gender and Ethnicity

- Older teens (15-18 year olds) spend more time with computers and listening to music, while video game-playing and TV watching goes down.
- Boys spend twice as much time playing videogames as girls. Girls listen to more music than boys.
- African American youth spend far more time watching TV, going to movies and playing videogames than White youth.

Children are a Special Audience

- With every technology of the 20th century, the introduction of that technology came with controversy about its impact on youth.

- Children are early adopters of media going back to the early 20th century and the youth movie going audience.
- Over the course of the 20th century children and youths leisure time became increasingly media-centric and increasingly commercialized

Television as a Dominant Activity of Childhood

- In the nearly 60 years of television in American life, it's role has been to be a dominant form of leisure time pursuit for younger and younger children
- Television characters and products intrude into other parts of children's leisure time by providing the source and objects of their play

Children Under Two

- Proliferation of Media for Children Under Two, e.g. Baby Einstein, Sesame Beginnings Interactive Toys
- Early Use of Screen Media
- Positive Parental Attitudes

From Media Use to Content Effects

- Historic concerns about violent and sexual content
- More recent concerns about commercial and food marketing content

Television Violence

NTVS Study of 1994-1998 found that:

- Violence pervades American Television
- Over all three years, a steady 60% of TV programs contained violence
- Much of TV violence is glamorized, sanitized and trivialized
- Very Few programs emphasize an anti-violence theme

Effects of Media Violence

- Television violence contributes to harmful effects on viewers
- Three types of harmful effects can occur from viewing television violence:
 - Learning aggressive attitudes and behaviors
 - Desensitization to violence
 - Increased fear of being victimized

Violence Effects on Children's Emotions

- Percent of college freshman reporting lingering effects of being frightened by a TV show:
 - 90% report intense fear reaction
 - 52% report sleep or eating disturbance
 - 22% report mental preoccupation
 - 35% report general avoidance

Advertising to Children

Young children may have difficulty making sense of commercial content

- Children under 4 cannot differentiate between programs and commercials (Ward, Reale, & Levinson, 1972).
- Children under 7 may not understand the persuasive intent of advertisements (Ward, Wackman, & Wartella, 1977).
- Children under 12 may have difficulty questioning commercial claims or being 'wary' of commercials.

Food Advertisements

Food ads are the most common ads during children's shows

- Over 60% of ads during children's programming are for food

(Sylvester, Achterberg & Williams, 1995)

- 1 food ad every 5 minutes on Saturday mornings

(Williams, Achterberg & Sylvester, 1993)

- 97.5% of these ads are for foods high in fat, sodium, cholesterol, or sugar

(Kuribayashi, Roberts & Johnson, 2001).

Special Concerns about Digital Media

- Children live in a constantly wired world
- Special Nature of Interactivity
- Networked communication